

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BRASIL 07028 250120Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 SAB-01 L-01 PRS-01
INR-05 CIAE-00 CPR-01 INRE-00 /034 W
-----042901 250139Z /12
O 242355Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3414
WHITE HOUSE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 7028

LIMDIS

FOR TODMAN FROM CRIMMINS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP MN
SUBJECT: GEISEL CANNOT ATTEND PANAMA TREATY SIGNING CEREMONY

1. I WAS ASKED BY FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA TO SEE HIM AT 7:00 PM.

2. SILVEIRA TOLD ME THAT HE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED BY PRESIDENT GEISEL TO GIVE ME A MESSAGE FOR TRANSMITTAL TO RESIDENT CARTER. AT THIS POINT, I GAVE SILVEIRA THE LIST THAT HE HAD REQUESTED AND THAT HAD BEEN FURNISHED ME BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CHIEFS OF STATE/GOVERNMENT WHO WOULD DEFINITELY ATTEND THE CEREMONY OR WERE LIKELY TO ATTEND. SILVEIRA COMMENTED THAT THE ONLY COUNTRIES HE KNEW ABOUT WERE VENEZUELA, COLOMBI AND COSTA RICA, WHICH HAD ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY THAT THEIR PRESIDENTS WOULDATTEND. (I DEDUCED FROM SILVEIRA'S LANGUAGE THAT THE GOB HAD BEEN BUSILY CHECKING CAPITALS.)

3. SILVEIRA SAID THAT GEISEL'S MESSAGE TO ME WAS THE FOLLOWING:

(A) HE AND THE GOB CONSIDERED THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS TO BE A POSITIVE
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FACT FOR US-PANAMANIAN RELATIONS AND FOR US-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS.

(B) HE WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE CONSULTATION CONCERNING THE CONVEIENCE AND OPPORTUNESS OF A JOINT INVITATION BY PRESIDENT CARTER AND GENERAL TORRIJOS.

(C) AS WAS KNOWN, THE PERIOD CONTEMPLATED FOR THE CEREMONY COINCIDED WITH THE CELEBRATION OF THE WEEK OF

THE FATHERLAND CENTERING ON INDEPENDENCE DAY, SEPTEMBER 7.

(D) THEREFORE, HE CONSIDERED IT VERY DIFFICULT FOR HIM PERSONALLY TO GO TO WASHINGTON.

(E) HE WOULD BE READY TO SEND A QUALIFIED REPRESENTATIVE IF THIS WERE ACCEPTABLE AND CONVENIENT.

4. SILVEIRA THEN STATED THAT THE NEXT POINT WAS FROM GEISEL FOR ME ALONE AND WAS OFFERED IN THE SPIRIT IN WHICH CONSULTATION HAD BEEN MADE: HE ASKED HIMSELF (WONDERED) WHAT THE REPERCUSSIONS ON US PUBLIC OPINION OF THE ATTENDANCE OF LATIN AMERICAN CHIEFS OF STATE/GOVERNMENT WOULD BE? WOULD THEY BE FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE? I REPLIED THAT IT WAS CLEAR THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S JUDGEMENT WAS THAT THEY WOULD BE FAVORABLE.

5. SILVEIRA THEN ADDED, SOMEWHAT AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT, THAT ANOTHER CONSIDERATION WAS THAT PRESIDENT GEISEL WOULD HAVE TO OBTAIN CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY.

6. REFERRING TO MY EARLIER REQUEST FOR A DECISION IN PRINCIPLE, I ASKED SILVEIRA WHETHER THE PRESIDENT HAD INDICATED WHETHER HE WOULD BE ABLE TO ATTEND IF THE DATES WERE, FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER, TO CHANGE. I EMPHASIZED THAT I HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING WHETHER A CHANGE WAS IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE. SILVEIRA REPLIED THAT THAT QUESTION
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HAD NOT BEEN ADDRESSED BUT COULD BE IF DESIRED. HE WENT ON TO NOTE THAT THE COUNTRIES HE HAD MENTIONED HAD ALREADY ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY THEIR ACCEPTANCE. HE SAID THAT BRAZIL WOULD NOT LIKE TO EMBARRASS OTHERS BY BEING THE "DIFFICULT ONE". I DID NOT PURSUE THE MATTER.

7. SAYING THAT I COULD NOT SAY WHETHER A "QUALIFIED REPRESENTATIVE" WOULD BE CONVENIENT, I ASKED SILVEIRA WHO SUCH A REPRESENTATIVE MIGHT BE: HIMSELF? THE VICE PRESIDENT? SILVEIRA SAID THAT HE DID NOT THINK IT WOULD BE HE, ALTHOUGH HE WOULD BE PLEASED TO GO. TO THE REFERENCE TO THE VICE PRESIDENT, HE REPLIED: "POSSIBLY, POSSIBLY." (THE VICE PRESIDENT IS A PURELY CEREMONIAL FIGURE IN THE BRAZILIAN SCHEME.)
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPRESENTATION AT CEREMONIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BRASIL07028
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770306-0659
Format: TEL
From: BRASILIA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770830/aaaaazcm.tel
Line Count: 110
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 89b1de55-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1508457
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GEISEL CANNOT ATTEND PANAMA TREATY SIGNING CEREMONY
TAGS: PDIP, OVIP, MN, PN, US, BR, (GEISEL, ERNESTO)
To: STATE WHITE HOUSE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/89b1de55-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009